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Week ending Friday, August 29, 2014

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Going green

A NEW green hub promoting sustainable transport in Southend has officially opened in Belfairs Park.

Work was completed earlier this month at the site which is linked to Belfairs Woodland Centre.

The aim of the hub is to encourage visitors to the Woodland Centre, park and ancient woodlands to consider how they travel.

The centre links a network of woodlands and cycle routes with a bike friendly cafe that provides cycle parking and electric vehicle charging.



HUB: The new green hub at Belfairs is now open

CAMPAIGN'S 'FANTASTIC' PROGRESS



By Charles Thomson

basildon@yellowad.co.uk

A CAMPAIGN to create 100 new apprentices in 100 days is making 'fantastic' progress, organisers have said.

The Yellow Advertiser launched its second annual campaign to encourage local school and college leavers into apprenticeships earlier this summer.

The scheme is jointly run with Basildon apprenticeship organisation LifeSkills.

The organisation is particularly keen to hear from school leavers looking for an alternative to college, and companies to offer places.

LifeSkills' operations director

Leon Bernasconi said: "I was over the moon with the results from the last campaign we did with the Yellow Advertiser and think that the timing of this is fantastic for any school-leavers that have not remained in sixth form or started at college."

"This sort of campaign really gives local people a greater understanding of the options available to teenagers and can have a significant effect on local employment statistics."

Basildon Council announced soon after the 2014 launch that it would support the campaign for a second year – and Southend and Castle Point councils have both now confirmed they too are backing the scheme.

After seeing the YA's front page launch in April 2013, then council leader Tony Ball ordered officers to help in any way they could.

Both organisations are liaising with LifeSkills about how they can best help the campaign, which not only urges young people to consider apprenticeships as an alternative to traditional higher education, but also calls on local businesses to create apprentice positions.

Last year we exceeded our target by almost 50 per cent.

With support from Basildon Council, we spurred 71 local companies to create 101 new positions in the Basildon area and recruited 144 young people into apprenticeships.

The authority introduced

LifeSkills to local companies and created 17 new apprenticeship positions of its own.

LifeSkills asked the YA to re-run the campaign in 2014, following the massive success.

The campaign will aim to recruit 16 to 18 year olds into sectors including business admin, hospitality, customer service, retail and warehousing.

LifeSkills is particularly successful at helping young people to qualify and find work, with 98 per cent of apprentices remaining employed after completing their courses, most with their original employers.

To find out more or sign up for an apprenticeship, call 0800 622 6471, or email info@learnaliving.co.uk

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INSIDE this week



Sin City 2
arrives at
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Yellow Advertiser

**Yellow Advertiser Ltd,
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Editor: Mick Ferris
Publishing director: Scott Wood
Switchboard: 01268 503400
Advertising: 01268 503450
Fax: 01268 503418/9 and 503455
Editor: 01268 503492
E-mail: southend@yellowad.co.uk
Distribution: Contact Caroline Wilson on 020 8364 4040 or e-mail distribution.enfield@ihnews.co.uk
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Competition

Win Cole & Bright solar garden lights

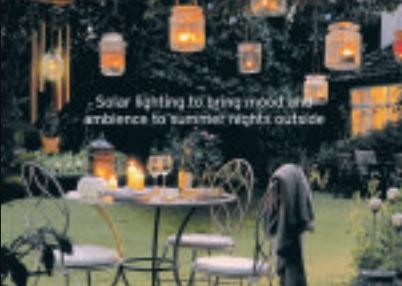
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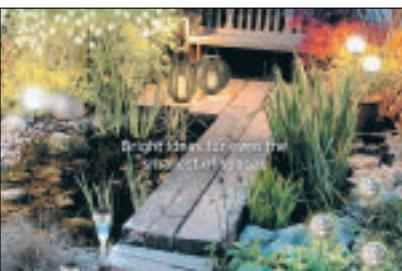
A new survey from the UK's leading solar lighting brand Cole & Bright has revealed that while half of people use lighting for decorative purposes, 16 per cent fear it would be too expensive to run. Thankfully, with super-efficient solar panels that recharge even on an overcast day, solar lighting offers you a reliable cost-effective lighting source every day of the year... it even automatically switches on at dusk and off at dawn!

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Leigh: Sun-Fri (8am-11pm) and Sat (8am-6pm), Derix Healthcare Pharmacy, (opposite side of Leigh Primary Care Centre), 1065 London Rd.

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STRIKE ACTION: Southend Unison have been calling on workers at the council and in schools to go on further strike in October

Photo by Martin Dalton

Union launches strike over pay

MEMBERS of Southend Union have launched a second wave of strike action over pay.

The organisation called on their members on Wednesday, August 20, at Southend civic offices, to strike on Tuesday, October 14, to oppose a one per cent pay offer.

Council and school staff took industrial action in July this year to oppose the low pay rise.

Unison believe the government and employers should come to the negotiating table to discuss a decent pay

rise for the workforce, which includes low-paid and part time employees.

Some local government staff are nearly 20 per cent worse off than they were at the start of the recession because of years of low and frozen pay, while inflation has increased.

The autumn strikes called 'Locked Out' could also see NHS staff joining the action due to an offer by the medical organisation which would see many staff getting a zero rise.

Unison branch secretary, Claire

Wormald, said members feel they are locked out of any benefits from the recovery in the British economy.

She said: "We have paid a high price in jobs and in our standards of living in the last five years, but we are getting nothing back. If there's more growth and wealth in the country, isn't it time working people saw some of that come our way?"

"Staff at Southend Council, at South Essex Homes and in our schools don't want to have to strike, but there is no choice when the govern-

ment seems hell bent on cutting our pay while the fat cats get richer and MPs feather their own nests.

"Some of our members face real hardship in paying the bills and feeding their families. No one should have to put up with poverty pay and it's no way to run public services."

"We are asking members to come out on strike again in October to show our employers that they have to get back to the negotiating table and they have to listen to ordinary people."

What do you think? Write to Yellow Advertiser, Acorn House, Great Oaks, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1AH, or e-mail letters@yellowad.co.uk

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Assault in pub

A MAN was left with a broken arm and cuts to his head after four men stormed a pub and attacked him.

The victim, who is in his 40s, was drinking in the Woodcutters Arms, in Eastwood Road North, on Saturday, August 9, at 9pm.

Four men entered the pub and attacked the victim with what police believe to be either a baton or a baseball bat.

The victim who was in his 40s was taken to Southend Hospital for treatment by a paramedic. Another man was also injured but did not wish to give details to the police.

Officers would like anyone who may have witnessed the assault to come forward and speak to them.

The only descriptions of the attackers officers have are that they are two white men and two black men.

Anyone with information should contact DC Layla Barker at Southend CID on 101 or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Yacht club fire

FIRE crews were called to the Alexandra Yacht Club last Saturday to tackle a blaze that has destroyed the building.

A total of six crews were called to the derelict wooden building at 11.45pm.

When they got there the 140 year old clubhouse was 75 per cent alight and they used three main jets to put the fire out by 1.43am.

Incident commander and station officer Steve Parker said the fire started inside the iconic building that is situated on the side of the cliffs on Southend seafront.

Mr Parker said: "A total of 30 fire fighters tackled the blaze into the early hours of the morning and the aerial platform was used to pour water at height on the burning structure.

"The building has been completely destroyed by the fire."

Industry boom predicted as airport action plan closes

By Paul Giles

southend@yellowad.co.uk

PLANS to generate more than 6,000 jobs in the area around Southend Airport are hitting the final round of consultation.

People in both the Rochford and Southend areas only have until the last week of September to fill out consultations about the Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) that could see industry boom in the area.

The plan includes developing the airport and new business parks, which together will create thousands of jobs.

It will also include improvements to traffic systems around Southend.

The final stage of the consultation aims to ensure that anyone who commented on the plan at the previous stage has an opportunity to consider whether the proposed modification dealt with their concerns.

Rochford District Council's portfolio holder responsible for planning, councillor Ian

Ward said the consultation surrounding the JAAP is crucial because it ensures people's opinions are taken into account.

Mr Ward said: "These opinions have been sought at every stage of the process, and now we are asking people to tell us what they think of government inspector's suggested amendments.

"The premise of the JAAP is that we need to make the most of the opportunities presented by the regeneration of London Southend Airport, in the interests of local residents and businesses.

"The plan has already helped us secure funding through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership for major road improvements that will benefit both Southend Borough and Rochford District."

Southend councillor for regulatory control, Mike Assenheim, said developing the area around the airport is critical to plans to boost the economies of Southend and

Rochford by attracting investment and jobs to the area.

He said: "We're determined to make sure that our proposals are the best possible fit for Southend and Rochford which is why we've listened carefully to the views of the residents, business and community groups who have already taken part in the consultation to date.

"As a result of the consultation, several changes have been made to the plan. We now want to know if these changes have addressed the issues people have raised.

"These will be taken into account before the inspector issues his final report on the plan." The schedule of modifications is available to view by visiting www.rochford.gov.uk or www.southend.gov.uk at council offices or in local libraries.

Comments can be made by going to <http://rochford.jdiconsult.net/jaap/> or an official representation form can be obtained by calling 01702 318191.



Gruelling: swimmers from Southend Sea Urchins team

Big challenge for swimmers

A GROUP of swimmers will be taking on a gruelling English Channel swim in September in aid of Cancer Research.

The Southend Sea Urchins team have had a tough year fighting back from a failed attempt in 2013 and the unexpected death of team member Tony Mellett.

But the group are passionate about continuing with their swim and on raising as much money as possible.

Jade Perry, the Sea Urchins team captain said nothing in life is simple and we all know we can't give up when we get knocked back.

The 32 year old said: "Just as we encouraged and continue to encourage our loved ones to keep going in their battles with cancer, so we are determined to win the battle with the English Channel."

The 21-mile relay will see the swimmers facing a spring tide and tackling uncertain weather conditions.

They are also being supported by pilot Mike Oram and by Inspire Projects who have funded the swim meaning all money raised will go to Cancer Research.

To donate to the team visit <https://www.justgiving.com/Southendseaurchins/>

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Police seek man in train incident

A MAN was left with a bloody nose after he was headbutted on a train heading towards Southend Victoria train station.

Police have released CCTV footage of a man they want to talk to in connection with the assault which happened on the 11.52pm train from London Liverpool Street, on Friday, July 18.

The 36 year old victim from Hullbridge was sitting in one of the rear carriages of the train close to a group of eight people when an argument broke out.

Detective constable David Bishop of the British Transport Police (BTP) explained after the train left Shenfield at 1.10am the victim and one of the group started arguing.

DC Bishop said: "This led to the man approaching the victim and headbutting him in the face, causing a nasty nose bleed."

"The victim left the train at Rayleigh, but the attacker stayed on board."

"I believe that he may have got off the train at Prittlewell."

"I am very keen to speak to the man pictured and am hopeful someone will recognise him."

"I believe he has information about the incident, and would ask anyone with information to get in touch with us."

"We will not tolerate violence on the rail network, passengers should expect to travel without the fear of being attacked."

"We are now working hard to catch the individual responsible for this assault and welcome any assistance from the public."

Anyone with information should contact the BTP on 0800 405040 quoting reference ESSUB/B15 of 11/08/2014.

What do you think? Write to Readers' Letters, Yellow Advertiser, Acorn House, Great Oaks, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1AH, or e-mail letters@yellowad.co.uk



WANTED: This man is wanted in connection with head butting a train passenger

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Free days out for the end of summer holidays

SOME of the most deprived families in Southend have been given a great summer by the Milton Community Partnership.

With the ward being the second most deprived in the country the partnership was set up to reach out to other organisations and services in the area to help promote a better way of life for residents.

Over the summer the organisation have been successful in taking people to day trips to London, Maldon and also took part in the recent Southend Carnival.

As well as holding free day trips and picnics in Southchurch Park, they will be holding an end of summer beach party on Wednesday, August 27, between 11am and 3pm.

Suzanne Bardwell, community builder at the partnership, said the youth in the area are empowering themselves during the holiday.

She said: "My job is only for a year and I have to link up services and organisations in the area.

"We have been working with the Trinity Family Centre recently.

"Our project is for the whole community, every Wednesday we have families that go to Southchurch Park for a picnic.

"Everyone has had a really nice time at the picnics and other events it's been really good to see." The partnership is run from St Mark's Church Hall, in Princes Street, and is a non-religious organisation.

For more information contact 01702 341605 or email miltoncommunity@hotmail.com



PARTNERSHIP: Members of the Milton Community Partnership at Belfairs Woods

Burglaries decrease

HOUSE burglaries in Essex have dropped by 10 per cent.

Essex Police said the drop was thanks to Operation Insight – a scheme designed to protect vulnerable houses and deter crooks.

The force released figures for the 10-months the scheme has been in force, compared to the same 10-month period a year earlier.

Between October 2013 and July 2014 there were 6,104 burglaries reported across the county, compared to 6,766 between October 2012 and July 2013.

The reduction amounts to 9.8 per cent.

Operation Insight uses police knowledge of burglars' tactics, known as 'optimal foraging', which means they tend to operate in areas they know very well and where they have committed successful burglaries in the past.

Police use intelligence about local crooks, as well as local crime reports, to make sure there is a higher police presence in at-risk areas.

Officers patrol the areas by foot and by car, stopping known offenders, carrying out stop-and-search operations and submitting intelligence reports.

They also visit homes close to recently-burgled properties to offer security advice and arrange for crime prevention officers or local handy men schemes to beef up home security.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh said: "These figures are excellent news and highlight the importance of Operation Insight in helping to reduce burglaries and the number of victims of crime in Essex."

Police Commissioner Nick Alston (Con) added: "We need our police force to be at the cutting edge of professional policing techniques. Operation Insight is a great example of Essex Police combining science and local experience to reduce burglaries across our country and keep our communities safe."

What do you think? Write to Readers' Letters, Yellow Advertiser, Acorn House, Great Oaks, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1AH, or e-mail letters@yellowad.co.uk

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Counting the cost of closure

By Paul Giles

southend@yellowad.co.uk
THE closure of one of Southend's most popular beaches over the start of the summer season cost taxpay-ers £26,716.

Shoebury, East Beach was closed down on Thursday, May 1, just before the bank holiday weekend, due to unexploded ordnance washing up on the shores.

Fears were raised the bombs may be a danger to the public by the council who consulted the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Following a brief consultation the beach was closed down for a total of more than seven weeks.

Signs and steel fencing were quickly erected around the site of the beach to stop the public walking where unexploded bombs were washing up.

Deputy leader of the council, Graham Longley, explained the authority licence the area to the area from the MOD and it was the council's decision to close down the beach.

Mr Longley said: "The decision was about public safety and we have therefore funded the closure from an emergency contingency budget.



FENCED OFF: East Beach

"This was a decision that I supported at the time."

"It should be remembered that the MOD will also have costs associated with the clo-

sure and subsequent re-opening and we have been working in partnership with them and have developed an effective working relation-

ship that has helped resolve this quickly."

Costings for the council include £10,500 for fencing and £504 for signs.

Photo by Mark Cleveland

Extra staffing to patrol East Beach came to £4,112 and £11,600 was spent on moving boats out of the area.

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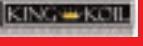
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THERAPY: Day care patient Adele Weatherley with creative therapist Lizzie Ireland

Creative sessions at hospice

A HOSPICE is calling on local artists to lend their skills to help deliver creative therapy sessions at its centre.

Creative therapy is an important part of the day for patients who visit the day care at Fair Havens Hospice, in Westcliff.

The supervised sessions enables patients to talk to others who are in the same situation while their mind is focused on something else.

It can improve self-esteem and gives the patients a chance to make something for

their loved ones.

The charity is looking at expanding the service by inviting local artists on to lead sessions alongside creative therapist Lizzie Ireland.

Lizzie, who has worked at Fair Havens for two years said she helps patients with a variety of things each week. She said: "We make cards, memory boxes, wooden hearts and more. I have a degree in illustration so I would like to get people in who can create things in pottery, ceramic,

etching, mono-printing, photography or even floristry, any skill that can be shared.

"We are looking for someone with an artistic background who is enthusiastic with lots of new ideas but who can also do things simply so it's manageable for us and the patients.

"They would need to be friendly and confident talking to and teaching people a new skill." Those who feel they can offer some of their free time to patients should contact Lizzie Ireland on 01702 220318.

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Woman gets payout after ovary removed

By Charles Thomson

basildon@yellowad.co.uk

A WOMAN was paid £5,000 after a Chelmsford hospital removed her ovary for no reason.

The victim, in her 30s, received the payout from Ramsay Healthcare UK – based at Springfield Hospital – in March 2014.

It was revealed on Tuesday, August 19, as the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman made reports on hospital errors public for the first time.

The surgeon who made the error was never disciplined because he

suddenly died during the complaint procedure.

The report, which did not state when the incident occurred, said the woman – referred to as Mrs F – has been sent to a gynaecologist by her GP following 'a long period of abdominal pain'.

It said: "The gynaecologist did not fully assess Mrs F and instead chose to operate on the basis of an inconclusive ultrasound scan that suggested there was an ovarian cyst and a blocked fallopian tube."

"During the operation he removed the ovary and fallopian tube, despite there being no evidence of a cyst or

blockage."

"Mrs F was still in pain after the procedure and sought a second opinion. She was told by a second gynaecologist that there had been nothing wrong with her ovary and it should not have been removed. During the complaint process, the hospital told Mrs F that the ovary was removed because she had insisted on it, something which is denied by Mrs F."

The ombudsman concluded there had been no need to remove the ovary and that even if the patient had insisted it be removed, the surgeon should have refused.

It said: "The gynaecologist was

justified in performing an investigative operation on Mrs F, but it was clear from photographs taken during the operation that the ovary was healthy."

"At this point, the gynaecologist should have stopped the operation. Instead he removed a healthy organ with no reason."

"There was no evidence that Mrs F has specifically requested the ovary's removal and, even if she had, there were no grounds for the gynaecologist to remove a healthy organ at that time."

The hospital apologised to the victim and paid £5,000 compensation.

The report said: "We also recommended that the hospital produce an action plan to address the failings identified."

David Hewitt, general manager of Springfield Hospital, said: "The surgeon is dead, unfortunately. He was a reasonably young man, but he had a sudden heart attack. The case was reviewed by some of his peers and they made some recommendations."

"The apology on behalf of the hospital was more to do with the fact that the process of dealing with the complaint was a little slow. I think the ombudsman felt perhaps we could have tried to do more."

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Man left injured in street attack

A MAN was left with a fractured skull and bleed on his brain after he was attacked in Southend in the early hours of Monday, August 18, in Short Street.

The 20 year old victim was on his way home after spending the night at Churchills Bar in town.

He was approached by a group of men who started assaulting him, knocking him to the ground, where he continued to be kicked and punched.

The victim returned home, but was admitted to hospital on Friday, August 22, when his condition got worse. Doctors found he had a fractured skull and a bleed on the brain. The man's family reported the incident to police on Friday and an investigation is being carried out at Southend CID.

DI Jon Burgess said the man was viciously attacked in the area of the old B&Q building and Connexions Office in Short

Street. DI Burgess said: "We do not have the precise time of the incident but it could have been between 1am to 3am. This seems to have been an unprovoked and particularly cowardly attack by a group of men."

"We want to hear from anyone who was in the area at the time who can give us more information about the incident." Anyone who can help should call DI Burgess on 101 extension 470271.

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Officer convicted

By Charles Thomson

basildon@yellowad.co.uk

AN ESSEX police officer has been convicted of abusing his position to form relationships with women.

PC Stephen Tilley, 26, of Millview Meadows in Rochford, pleaded guilty to

a charge of misconduct in a public office at Ipswich Crown Court last week.

He had been scheduled to stand trial at Chelmsford Crown Court on Monday, August 18, but the venue was changed at the last minute and he entered a guilty plea.

PC Tilley, who was based at Rayleigh police station, admitted that between May 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013, he had 'abused' police computer systems to carry out checks on 14 people.

The court heard he had investigated 11 women and three men without any policing purpose.

Essex Police misconduct documents said he had 'abused' his position to form relationships with a number of

females'.

PC Tilley was charged following an internal investigation by Essex Police, supervised by the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

The criminal charge said he 'abused, for personal purposes, information provided to him in a position of trust in his official capacity by members of the public'.

It also said he had 'abused his authority to access personal data on Essex Police computer systems and inspected such data when not necessary to do so for purposes of preventing or detecting crime'.

A CPS spokesman said PC Tilley, currently suspended from Essex Police, could be sentenced at Ipswich Crown Court on any date in the three weeks beginning on October 6.

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If you have an hour to spare on a Tuesday or Thursday morning and don't mind a bit of a sing a long then this a lot of fun. To find out how you make a difference by volunteering, just contact Jessica at the Volunteer Centre in Basildon on 01268 294124 or go to www.volunteeressex.org to find your nearest volunteer centre.



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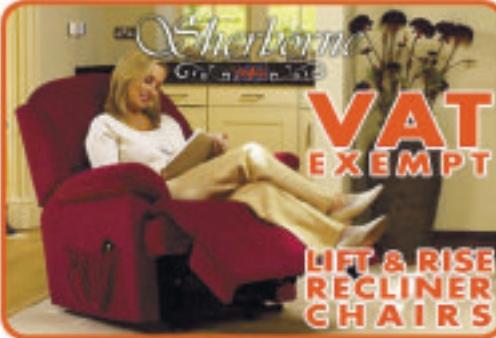
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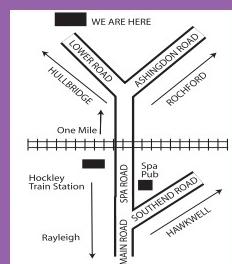
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POET: Jo Overfield who has arranged the event with other members of Sundown Arts

Poetry event

THIS Friday will see some of the best spoken word artists and first time performers showcasing their work at Elsie's Cafe in Leigh.

The cafe in Leigh Community Centre will be opening its doors and will include Janet Gershwick, whose one woman show has sold out at the Southwold Arts Festival.

Comparers for the evening will be by seasoned open mic producers of Sundown Arts, which features three poets, Jo Overfield, Cherry Scott and Ray Morgan, all of whom have been performing for more than a decade.

Ray Morgan, from Sundown Arts said: "It is really taking off as a cute event space that is different to the rest. Sundown is fully booked for open mic spaces but audience members are encouraged to bring their work in case there is some extra time on the night." There will be a cash bar, teas and coffees and entry is only £3 and the event runs from 7pm to 11pm.

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Opinion and readers' letters

Oak Road not the only parking pain

CANVEY Island Independent party are on firm ground when arguing for the removal of parking charges at the council's Oak Road car park but it is a pity that their parochial concerns could not be extended to another area of the borough which is suffering even more than the shops close to Oak Road.

I mean of course the shops in the High Road, Benfleet. The High Road shopping area, apart from during school hours is almost deserted all of the day. The Council with their half baked plan is in the process of decimating the shopping opportunities for residents.

In general there is no problem with car users paying to park their cars, but when this drives drivers away from using the local facilities resulting in closures, then things should change. Closed shops are of no use to the elderly and disabled who can't get to Tesco or Sainsbury.

I just hope that the local shops can hang on 'til the Council sees sense.

The previous twice when charges were introduced they were removed within a year. It's a shame that history has to repeat itself so many times.

Further, where will the

Council go with its policy of "fair parking across the Borough" when the Aldi store at Tarpots is opened and free parking is available there?

Brian Wilson
Benfleet

No to plan to nationalise rail industry

THE Labour candidate M. Le-Surf has become a right old busybody, writing his opinions on everything to everybody. The general elections are some nine months away and this will, no doubt, become very tiresome.

In one of his musings, he fantasizes about the "need for train fare changes". What he actually wants is "reductions" of 20 per cent, but what he should have said was "railway nationalisation".

And failing this monstrous nonsense, he proposes, that at the very least, an incompetent army of bureaucrats once again take over and run the railways.

In a typical socialist manner, he never explains why or how this should be done. Neither does he bother to explain why should a business proprietor sell his goods or services for less money than the market will bear, never mind when it's even less than it cost him.

Fred Nicholson.
Westcliff

Tributes continue to our Paul

I HAVE only just learned of the unexpected death of Paul Peterson, a stalwart reporter and sincere proponent of equality for all. While at Disability Essex, I got to know Paul as a man who brought insight and professionalism into his reporting and quality journalism.

He did not simply take the easy option of cutting and pasting pre-digested press releases, to create an instant story. His style was to check out the facts, and go to various sources.

Then, and only then, would a concise and incisive report be produced.

At Disability Essex we pioneered re-skilling and retraining, to produce a productive route to sustainable employment for people who were disabled. All training was accredited and the outcome was often a passport to new jobs – previously thought to be inaccessible to those who had physical, sensory, or mental impairments that had seen to be barriers to gainful work.

Paul enthused at this approach, and undertook his own "Access Auditor" course with us. He valued our training for mobility scooter driving instructors, IT, and other vocational skills.

I will miss him. He was a fine and worthy example of someone who saw disability as a challenge and a bridge to finding new ways of contributing to life.

He was not defined by his limitations, he bypassed them.

Richard Boyd, OBE DL
Former CEO Disability
Essex (2000-2011)

Sucked into a vacuum of bureaucracy

First they came for the light bulbs, then the street lights and now the EU is coming for the vacuum cleaners. No it's not April's fools day either. As of September 1, any vacuum cleaner with a motor higher than 1600 watts will fall foul of a new EU ruling. By 2017, the highest motor vacuum cleaner anyone can buy will be a 900 watt motor. So readers will still have time to buy a decent vacuum cleaner before the September 1 ban.

For those with asthma, breathing conditions or keep pets this stupid ban will make a dramatic difference to their health. The reason for this ban is to appease the green maffia.

What will be next on the EU's green agenda to ban? Tea and two of toast?

Not even David Cameron's great promise of a renegotiation of our membership of the EU has resulted in stopping the EU sticking its nose into how people keep their homes clean. It's time we left the EU now and let these Brussels based politicians live in their unclean dens of iniquity.

Cllr. Kerry Smith
Leader of the Basildon UKIP Group

Speed cameras on M25

MOTORISTS using the 16 mile stretch of the M25 between junctions 27 (M11) and 30 (Dartford Crossing) should be extra mindful of the speed limit as the Highways Agency is now switching on speed cameras which were fixed to the gantries when the road was widened two years ago.

The cameras work in conjunction with the electronic signs on the gantries, which usually show the speed limits in red rings. However, the

cameras are not currently active when the electronic signs are blank.

The Highways Agency can vary speed limits according to traffic conditions and has introduced the scheme across other parts of the M25.

Cllr Clarence Barrett Residents' Association

We welcome letters and e-mails on all subjects. Please keep them to fewer than 250 words and include your full name, address and daytime telephone number, wherever possible, for verification.

Anonymous letters will not be accepted for publication.

Contributions may be edited for reasons of space.

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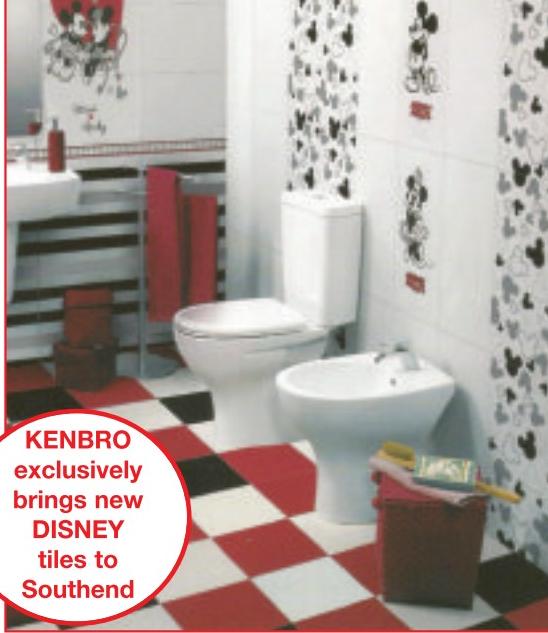
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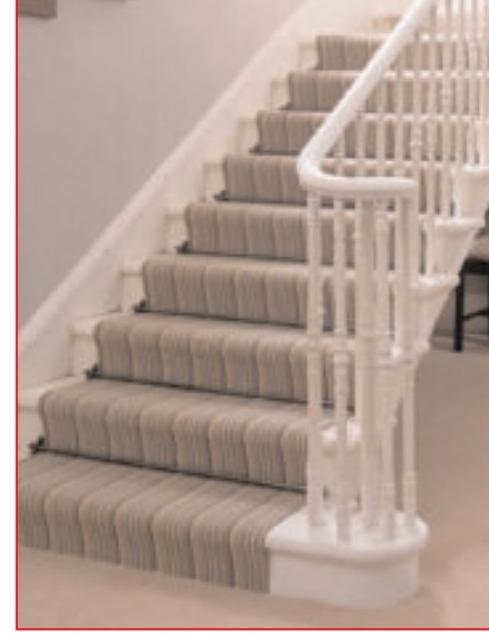
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Firebirds ready to burn



By LIZ WADE

NO-ONE could accuse a Brentwood singing group of taking the easy option when it comes to choosing shows.

Firebirds, which grew out of singing teacher Cathy Edkins' singing groups – Humming Birds and Blue Birds – has picked The Secret Garden for only its second production at Brentwood Theatre.

This musical version is based – sometimes loosely – on Frances Hodgson Burnett's book, and is very much a show for singers,

full of beautiful songs, which suits Firebirds very well.

The story tells of 10-year-old Mary Lennox's experience as she has to join an unknown and too welcoming family, in England after her parents and nursemaid - ayah- all die from cholera.

"Secret Garden gives us a chance to bring something new to the audience. It has been a challenge to stage it," Cathy said.

"The story is told mainly by the chorus of Dreamers – ghostly characters from the past from India and England.

"As the action is set in India and Yorkshire we have had to be ingenious with sets, which we have made ourselves and as a new group we have a limited budget, so have begged and borrowed costumes and props.

"We managed to find a real Victorian wheelchair – a bit of a coup," she added.

The nine-piece orchestra plays from the wings!

Cathy, who is one of the four prime movers of Firebirds with Liz Gibson, and Allen Clark, who direct the show, plus musical director Nat Thurlow, said she was

delighted there were so many parts for youngsters.

"I still teach singing in three local schools and have private pupils, so it has been great to be able to offer parts to several of them," she added.

Abbie Wood, who is 14, takes the starring role. She goes to Westcliff School for Girls and also takes drama classes.

Theo Harris, 12, plays Colin Craven – who turns out to be Mary's cousin and becomes a good friend.

● Turn to page 20

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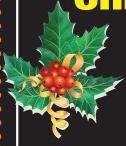


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Liz at Large

YA features reporter Liz Wade goes out and about with her boys



Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red

AS VIEWS go, there is one in London that is quite frankly breathtaking – Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red.

This art installation – a sea of poppies in the moat at the Tower of London – has become a landmark in its own right, be it a temporary one, marking 100 years since the first full day of Britain's involvement in the First World War.

While the poppies are a stunning sight to see they are also thought-provoking as every one of them represent a British or colonial military fatality during the First World War. The first poppy, planted by the longest serving Tower of London Yeoman Warder on July 7, has since been followed by thousands more, and on August 5, the art installation – a symbol of remembrance – was officially unveiled on the centenary of the first full day of Britain's involvement in the First World War.

The number of poppies will continue to grow until a staggering 888,246 of them progressively fill the tower's famous moat up until the last is planted on Armistice Day, on November 11.

Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, created by ceramic artist Paul Cummins, with setting by stage

designer Tom Piper, was inspired by a line in the will of a Derbyshire man who joined up in the earliest days of the war and died in Flanders.

Knowing that everyone was dead and he was surrounded by blood, the man wrote "The Blood Swept lands and seas of red, where angels fear to tread".

Potters at Paul's studio have been hand-making the pieces using techniques which were utilised by potters during the First World War, and each one of the poppies will be sold after Remembrance Day to raise millions of pounds which will be shared equally amongst six service charities including Cobseo, Combat Stress, Coming Home, Help for Heroes, The Royal British Legion and SSAFA, which provides lifelong support to anyone who is currently serving or has ever served in the Royal Navy, British Army or Royal Air Force and their families.

Alongside its sea of poppies, the Tower of London is also hosting a number of exhibitions to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Britain's involvement in the First



INSTALLATION: the poppies will remain in place until Armistice Day

World War, including a collection of extraordinary photographs and films from 1914 in The Flint Tower showing how the tower was used in the recruitment, deployment and training of soldiers and also became, once again, a place of execution. To mark the centenary of the First World War, photographs of the tower today and in 1914 have been combined to create powerful images of the fortress and its people then and now.

Historical re-enactments also includes 'Your Country Needs You' in the Fortress Tower up until October 24, and from November 3 to 11, when the call to arms is eagerly seized by some but not by others, and war time songs and tales from the western front from October 25 to November 2.

Family activities also include a Soldier's Small Book trail, available from the Welcome Centre until November 11, through which you

can ask questions, pick up the pieces and store them in a commemorative logbook, and from November 6 you will also be able to discover the stories of 11 spies in The East Wall Walk, who were imprisoned and executed at the tower during the First World War. *For further information about Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, and other events taking place at The Tower of London, visit www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon

You can read previous days out Liz and her boys have enjoyed by visiting www.yellowad.co.uk and clicking on blogs

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However, you can add the details of your event to our website at www.yellowad.co.uk

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■ Thorpe Bay Horticultural Society Autumn Flower and Homemaking Show, St Augustine's Church Hall, bric-a-brac, plant sale, refreshments, admission 50p, members free, 01702 585297.

■ Iver James at the Margueriteville Country Music Club, St James the Great Church Hall, Elmsleigh Drive, SS9 3DP. 8-11pm, £7, 07825 686249.

■ Hullbridge Gardens Association, 63rd Annual Flower & Vegetable Show, Hullbridge Community Centre, Poole Lane, SS5 6PA. For more info www.essexinfo.net/hga/

■ Rayleigh History Walk, 3pm from Rayleigh Windmill, Bellingham Lane, off High St, £2 pp, info: 01268 775328.

■ Yugioh Club, you can play and trade yugioh, 120 Southend Road, St Catherine's Church Hall, Wickford, SS11 8EB, there are mini tournaments, Saturdays 1.30-4.20pm, 07985 671289.

■ Dad's and Kids Club, The Megacentre, Rayleigh, Saturdays 10.30am-1.30pm, free admission, games, activities, arts and crafts, for boys and girls 5-17 years with their fathers and father figures, 01268 779100.

■ Saturday Morning Club, St Michaels Church Hall, Leigh Road, every Saturday 10am-noon, entertainment provided by choirs, soloists, musicians, refreshments, admission free, Inter-Church Caring for the Elderly and Disabled, 01702 437863.

■ Meeting, Brush Strokes Art Group, Highlands Methodist Church, Leigh, every Saturday 9.15am-12.15pm, new members welcome, 01277 627043.

■ Different Strokes Exercise Class, St Peter's Church Hall, Eastbourne Grove, Southend, for those who have had a stroke, every Saturday 2.30pm, 01702 612509.

■ Jazz Workshop, Southend Jazz Co-op, Hadleigh old Fire Station, Hadleigh every Saturday 10am-1pm, £5 per session (concessions available).

Sunday, August 31

■ South East Essex Ramblers Group, Walk up to Hadleigh Castle, 10am meet on Two Tree Island, slightly hilly, great views. Bill 01702 526079.

■ Dinner Jazz, Westcliff Hotel, 1pm, 01702 345247.

■ Allotments Open Day, Manchester Drive allotments, Leigh SS9 3EZ, 11am-3pm, free entry, fun for all the family, BBQ, stalls, live music, bug hunt, competitions.

■ Canvey Miniature Railway Train Rides, by Waterside Sport Centre, Sommes Ave, Canvey Island, SS8 9RA. Every Sunday until 12th October. Open from 10.30am-4pm, choice of two railways, steam and electric locos. Adults and children £1 each ride, all welcome, weather permitting.

■ Hockley & District Horticultural Society trading hut, February through October, 10am til 12 noon, for all your gardening sundries, membership £3, situated behind Hawkwell Village Hall, Main Road, Hawkwell.

■ Jazz, Ron Spack's Dinner Jazz, Westcliff Hotel, Westclif, 1pm, 01702 345247.

■ Sunday School, Get on Board (No Charge) at The Ark, Hadleigh Methodist Church, Chapel Lane, SS7 2PQ, every Sunday 11am-noon, age 3-10 years.

■ Quaker Meeting for silent worship and meditation, Quaker Meeting House, Dundonald Drive, Leigh, Sundays 10.30-11.30am, followed by conversation over tea and biscuits, all welcome.

■ King's Church Southend at Blenheim School, off Blenheim Chase, Leigh, every Sunday 10.30am-noon., 01702 523639.

■ Greek Community of Southend and District, Church of St Barbara, St Phanourious and St Pauls, Salisbury Avenue, Westclif, every Sunday 10am-noon.

■ Sunday Club, TGH Evangelical Church, Kiln Road, Thundersley, (children 3-12 years), Bible stories, craft, singing, every Sunday 10.45-11.45am, no charge, further details 01702 554904.

■ Mojo Friendship Club, Travellers Joy, Dowlorth Road, Rayleigh, 11.30am, open to all, details Mo 07757 658799.

Monday, September 1

■ Jazzytet with John Sharpe Saxophone/Alex Boyle Keyboard, Oakwood Rayleigh Rd, Eastwood, 8.30pm, 01702 512819.

■ Beginner's Art Class, Women's Institute Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh, 10am-12pm or 1-3pm,

paulalcock43@yahoo.co.uk 01702 615475.

Monday, September 1

members, Canvey Short Mat Bowls Club, please ring Kevin on 01268 792433.

■ Short Mat Bowls, Monday/Tuesday afternoons in Thundersley, beginners welcome, details 01268 779174.

■ Indoor Short Mat Bowls, Prittlewell Bowls Club, Priory Park, Southend, two mats available, with 5 day sessions, Monday to Friday, new players welcome, details Ray 01268 777666.

■ Indoor Bowls, George Hurd Centre, Audley Way, Basildon, for over 50s, 2-4pm, £2, 01268 465854.

■ Senior Citizens Club, Benfleet's No 1 Club, Richmon Hall, Benfleet, 1.30-3.30pm, entertainment, all welcome.

■ Southend Christian Counselling Service, open to all, Mondays 5.30-7.30pm and Thursdays 2-7.30pm, further details call our 24 hour answer machine 01702 552552 and we will get back to you.

■ Over 50's Keep-fit Classes, Fryerns Community Centre, Monday afternoons, further details Pat 01268 770294.

■ Over 50's session, Megacentre Rayleigh, 7 Brook Road, Badminton and table tennis 2-4pm, £3.50 inc refreshments and equipment, 01268 773100.

■ Activity Session for adults with special needs, (term time only), 10am-12pm, The Megacentre Rayleigh, 7 Brook Road, Rayleigh, £1 per session, carers free.

■ Duplicate Bridge, Balmoral Bridge Club, Highlands Methodist Church, Olive Ave, Leigh (opposite Thames Drive), 1.15pm-4.30pm Tuesdays 7pm-10.30pm, Vernon on 01702 343611 or Tony 01702 520993.

■ Duplicate Bridge, Thorpe Bay Bridge Club, 62 Southchurch Boulevard, Southend, non-members of all standards welcome, 2-4.45pm (no partner needed), evenings 7.30-10.30pm, call Danny 07843 771774.

■ Weekly Craft Workshop, St Peter's Church Hall, Thundersley, Benfleet, every Monday 6-8pm, further details Michelle 07730 582784.

■ Basildon Players Amateur Dramatic Group, Mondays and Wednesdays 8-10pm, James Hornby High School, Leinster Road, Laindon, further details Jeff Levy 07951 681582 or email join@basildonplayers.co.uk

■ Zumba, Pitsea Day Centre Over 50s, Northlands Pavement, Pitsea, every Monday 9.15-10am, 01268 465432.

■ Beginners Computer Course, Pitsea Day Centre Over 50s, Northlands Pavement, Pitsea, 11am-1pm, 01268 465432.

■ Club 60, Southend, various activities every weekend, 9.30-4pm, tea bar, non-members welcome, £2 day pass, details 01702 613562.

■ Short Mat Bowls Club in Hadleigh, new hall all mod/cons, 4 mats, Monday and Wednesday evenings welcomes new

Tuesday, September 2

■ Pamper and Gift Evening, Wick Community Centre, Silva Island, Wickford. All therapeutic and beauty treatments, hypnotherapy, thai massage, jewellery, babbles and children's clothes, shoes, handbags, handmade goods, cupcakes, happy cakes, shellac nails, slimming consultant plus much more. 6.30-10pm, admission £2.50 inc. hot/cold drink and free raffle, 01268 572727 or email: pampere@yahoo.co.uk

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what's on

■ Art Class, all abilities welcome, Women's Institute Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh, 10am-12pm or 1-3pm, paula.lcock43@yahoo.co.uk 01702 615475.

■ Table Tennis, 7.30-10.30pm, The Megacentre, 7 Brook Road, Rayleigh, £3.60 per session.

■ Singles Friendship club for 55+ and over. Are you single and over 55? Then don't be alone come along to our friendship club and you will be sure of a friendly welcome. Every Tuesday at the South Benfleet Social Club with a variety of events, Maureen 01268 692998.

■ Weekly Craft Group, Oasis Coffee House, 189 Leigh Road, Leigh, 2.30-4pm. No charge or booking required. Emma 01702 471873.

■ Willow Park Short Mat Bowls Club require new or experienced players. We meet at the James Hornsby School, Laindon village. First session free call or text Alan on 07952 043456.

■ Social Dance, 1.45pm at St Cedds Church, Bridgewater Drive, Westcliff. Ballroom, Sequence, Latin, Friendly Group, all welcome 01702 618771.

■ Evening of Clairvoyance, St Cecilia's Christian Spiritualist Church, 9 Lord Roberts Avenue, Leigh, 7.15pm, £2, enquiries Anne 01702 556470.

■ Folk Music, The Hoy at Anchor Folk Club, Royal British Legion, 7/9 Northview Drive, Westcliff, 'Steve Tilston', 8pm. 01702 715111.

■ Tea Dance, Ashingdon Memorial Hall, Ashingdon Road, Rochford, ballroom, Latin and sequence, every Tuesday 2-4pm. 01702 584575.

■ Scrabble Club, Hockley Social Centre (at rear of library) every Tuesday 6.30-10pm, first two visits free, also second and fourth Saturday of each month 2-5pm. All ages welcome, 01702 205910.

■ Meeting, Ladies Fellowship at the Salvation Army in Hadleigh, 7.30pm, any age, good speakers, chatter nights, outings, meals out and summer walks, 50p per week or annual subscription, just come along or call 01702 551470.

■ The Puffer's Club, Exercise Class for people with breathing difficulties, run by people with breathing difficulties, Ambleside Sports and Social Club, Ambleside Drive, Southend, Tuesdays 12.45-2.30pm, 01702 610050/466827.

■ Pathfinders Blind and Partially Sighted Group every Tuesday and Friday, Fyrefly Baptist Church, Whitmore Way, wide range of activities and outings, Tuesdays 9.30am-2pm and Fridays 10am-2.30pm.

■ Evening of Clairvoyance, St Cecilia's

Church, 9 Lord Roberts Avenue, Leigh, every Tuesday 7.15pm, £2, enquiries Anne 01702 556470.

■ The George Hurd Centre, Audley Way, Basildon, for the over 50s, Yoga: 10-11.15am, Sit down Yoga: 11.10-12.10, Keep fit: 12-1pm, Line Dancing: 1.20-2.20pm, Chess: 1.30-3.30pm, Craft: 1.30-3.30. 1.30-3.30pm. 01268 465854.

■ Singles Social Group, Meets The Mews, Nelson Mews off Clarence Road car park, Southend, age group 50plus, every Tuesday 8pm, 07970 432994.

■ Singles Friendship Club for 50 plus, South Benfleet Social Club, every Tuesday 8.15pm, further details Maureen 01268 692998.

■ New and Nearly New Stall, outside St Martin's Church, Town Centre, Basildon, facing the gardens (if wet in church foyer), every Tuesday 10am-on.

■ Table Top Sale, Outpatients Foyer, Southend Hospital, every Tuesday 9.30am-3pm, Breathe Easy Southend, helping support people with lung problems. 01702 258661.

■ Carpet Bowls, Eastwood Community Centre, top of Morrison's car park, 1.45-3.45pm, (and Thursdays 3.30-5.30pm), no experience necessary, non competitive, £2 per session including tea, joining fee £5, first session free.

■ Bingo and Hoy, Wick Community Centre, Wickford, every Tuesday 1.30-4pm, further details John Clarke 01268 570575.

■ Top Cats Social Club, (Southend Mencap), Castle View School, Meppel Avenue, Canvey, 7.45-9.15pm, for adults with learning disabilities age 25 plus, £2 per session, details 01702 341250.

■ Tuesday Luncheon Club, Inter-Church Caring for the Elderly and Disabled, Avenue Baptist Church Hall, Milton Road, Westcliff, for people living alone or with their carers, further details 01702 478691/525141/340617.

■ Little Lunchers Activity Club, St Michael's Church, Rayleigh, every Tuesday 11.45am-1.15pm.

■ Vange Tots, The Vange Community Centre, Vange Hill Drive, Vange, every Tuesday 9.30-11.30am, admission £1, snack and drinks provided for all. 01268 498642.

■ Shoebury Flagship, Rainbow Children's Centre, Friars School, Constable Way, Shoebury, every Tuesday 1.30-3.30pm, health visiting team offering activities, advice and support for parents with babies and children aged up to 5 years. 01702 577656.

Wednesday, September 3

- Leigh Travel Club, Nepal, 'A photographic Journey around the roof of the world'. A talk by Paul Thwaites, The Leveigh Hall, 67 Leigh Road, Doors open 7.30 for 7.45 start, £2 admission includes refreshments, 01702 474475.
- The Concord Ladies Club of Rayleigh, meet every Wednesday, 1.30-3pm. Interesting speakers, social afternoons, some outings and a Christmas meal out, are a few of the things they do. New members welcome, at Caley Hall, Crown Hill, Rayleigh, 01268 743240.
- Leigh Singles Social Club, 45-65's. Meet every Wednesday at Bellini's, London Road, Leigh. Check out our website www.leighsingles.co.uk for further details.
- Activity Session for children with special needs, ages 5-18, (term time only). The Megacentre, 7 Brook Road, Rayleigh. Donation of £1 per session, siblings welcome.
- Graham's Social Tea Dance, every Wednesday, Richmond Hall, Richmond Ave, Benfleet. Light headed afternoon, of Ballroom & Latin and sequence dances for dancers of all abilities. 2.45-2.50pm, large free car park, strictly over 18's, £4 per person. 01268 572473.
- George Hurd Centre, Audley Way, Basildon, for the over 50's. Keep fit: 10-11am, Sit down keep fit: 10-11am, Salsa/Ballroom: 11.30am-12.30pm, Sequence Dance: 12.30-1.15pm, Art: 1.30-3.30pm, Indoor bowls: 1.30-3.30pm, £2, 01268 465854.
- Singles Connection Friendship and Social Club, open evening at the Haywain for over 45s, Five Bells roundabout, Bobbing, 8.30pm, last Wednesday of every month. 07902 252758.
- Barn Dance, Grand Ceilidh Club, live music from The Music Makers, Royal Naval Association, East Street, Southend, live music, 8.30pm, 01702 553622.
- Indoor Carpet Bowls, St Edmunds Hall, Pantile Avenue, Southend, every Wednesday 2-4pm, further details contact Olive 01702 309280.
- Played Bowls Before? Come and try it at FS&S Club, Gardeners Close, Basildon, all weather green, free coaching given, regular club mornings, call Chris 01268 419831.
- Breathing Exercise Group, run by Breathe Easy Basildon, Steeple View Memorial Hall, Wednesdays 1.20-2.30pm, if you have COPD or recently finished from Pulmonary rehabilitation call Honorie 01268 574390 for further details.
- Leigh Singles Social Club, Bellini's, London Road, Leigh, for ages 45-65, every Wednesday 8pm, www.leighsingles.co.uk
- Social Afternoon of Ballroom and Latin Dancing, Mill Hall, Rayleigh, every Wednesday 1.45-4.15pm, with Pat and Bob, 01702 544112.
- Line Dancing Lessons, St Margaret's Church Hall, Lime Avenue, Leigh, 12.30-2.30pm, helping to raise funds for the church hall. 01268 281488.
- Afternoon Tea Dance, Richmond Hall, High Road, Benfleet, (entrance off Richmond Avenue), large free car park, 2-4.30pm, £4 per person, includes refreshments, strictly over 18's. 01268 752473.
- Health Walk, Canvey Sea Wall, 10.30am, meet Labworth car park, Canvey Island, every Wednesday, details 01702 318121.
- Meeting, Alanon, International/Worldwide Support Group for families, wives, husbands, friends of alcoholics and other addictions, 1 Sutton Road, All Saints Church, Southchurch, Southend, 7.30pm, all welcome (non-denominational).
- Pulse Drum Club, St David's Church Hall, Rayleigh Road, Eastwood, every Wednesday 3.45pm - 4.45pm, £3 per session. 01702 540111.
- Over 50's session, Megacentre Rayleigh, 7 Brook Road, Rayleigh. Badminton and short mat bowls 2-4pm, £3.50 includes refreshments and use of equipment. 01268 773100.
- Activity sessions, The Megacentre, 7 Brook Road, Rayleigh, (term time only), for children with special needs aged 5-18, free admission, siblings welcome, details 01268 779100.
- Palace Writers Group, every Wednesday 7.30pm, alternating venues with the Palace and Cliffs Pavilion, open mic events and public readings planned, further details 01702 390472.
- Meeting, Roche Art Group, St Teresa's Church Hall, located behind the Church, 109 Ashingdon Road, Rochford, 7.30-9.30pm, visitors welcome, further details Gill 01702 421737.
- Advanced Computer Course, Pitsea Day Centre Over 50s, Northlands Pavement, Pitsea, 9.30-11.30am. 01268 465432.
- Over 50s Session, The Megacentre, Rayleigh, Wednesdays and Thursdays 2-4pm, badminton and short mat bowls, session price 3.50 includes refreshments and use of equipment. 01268 779100.
- Duplicate Bridge, Highlands Methodist Church, Olive Avenue, Leigh, small friendly club, Wednesdays 7.30pm, further details Hilary 01702 712501.

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eating out

Advertisement feature

Have a party at Tandoori Parlour this Christmas

EVERYTHING from party nights to special banquets are on offer this Christmas at the largest Indian restaurant in Essex.

Tandoori Parlour, at 61-63 Hart Road, Thundersley, is the perfect location for festive celebrations, thanks to its outstanding menu or buffet deals as well as a doubles for singles drinks promotion throughout the Christmas period.

If you are looking for somewhere to enjoy a pre-Christmas meal with your friends, family or work colleagues, then why not head for Tandoori Parlour. As well as its outstanding food and promotions, the restaurant also promises your table for the night, as well as DJ entertainment, hats, crackers and party novelties. There will be a disco and karaoke every night of the week through to January, with a resident DJ on both floors and a choice of Indian or English cuisine.

Its four-course gourmet Indian buffet, its extended full English Christmas Menu and its four-course silver-served Indian menu starts from just £11.95 per person.

The top restaurant is also open throughout Christmas including Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Eve and New Years Day, offering top food and entertainment.

Its Christmas Day Banquet, served from noon, will include traditional English cuisine or a full Indian menu, or both cuisines if you would like, and costs just £24.95 for adults and £12.95 for children under 12.

The restaurant's Boxing Day Buffet offers outstanding value at just £11.95 per person, while its popular New Years Eve Grand Gala Night promises to be an evening to remember. The



gala evening includes a full Indian menu or buffet, free champagne at midnight, Scottish pipers and drummers, two radio DJs, a doubles for singles deal until 8.30pm and the chance to dance the night away until 2am.

On New Year's Day, you can also celebrate in style at its gourmet luncheon offering a choice of a full menu or buffet.

Tandoori Parlour, which can seat more than 400 people, has outstanding facilities including

a Crystal Room, a cocktail bar, dance floor and stage area.

The restaurant, which offers a takeaway service, is also fully air conditioned and licensed, and has full disabled facilities as well as a large free car park opposite with no restrictions for Tandoori Parlour customers.

For further information or to make a reservation call Tandoori Parlour on 01268 793786 or 01268 793877.

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GALLACHER'S Smokehouse Bar & Grill is now open for business after a 10 week refurbishment of their premises near Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea. Situated at 1743 London Road, Gallacher's is now serving authentic barbecued pulled pork, ribs, chicken and more, all of which are cooked in smokers imported directly from Oklahoma, USA. There's hand-crafted burgers too and mouth-watering steaks, chargrilled to perfection, as well as a great wine list, craft beers from around the world and beer and cider on

tap. What's more, the atmosphere is relaxed and casual, making it a great place to kick back and enjoy the taste of those southern American states.

Why not take your seat at Gallacher's now, at 1743 London Road, Leigh-on-Sea, just 50 yards from Thames Drive traffic lights? Reservations at the restaurant, which is open from noon for lunch until late for dinner, can be made by calling 01702 474611.

Gallacher's is just what the area needed, and now it's here for your enjoyment.

eating out

Advertisement feature

Taj Mahal attracts its share of famous faces



LEIGH-on-Sea's oldest Indian restaurant offers the ultimate experience for diners, from outstanding cuisine to fantastic service.

For more than 40 years the restaurant, at 77 Leigh Road, has gone out of its way to ensure diners receive the best – ever since opening its doors in 1973.

Today the restaurant, which is still owned by the Uddin family and run by the owner's sons, serves award-winning cuisine having impressed a team of celebrity judges including the likes of chef Ainsley Harriott, comedian, writer and radio and television presenter, Hardeep Singh Kohli, and actress and television personality, Lisa Faulkner, a former winner of BBC's Celebrity Master Chef.

The judges were so impressed with the Taj Mahal's cuisine that it's chef and owners were presented with a record of achievement certifi-

cate after coming runner-up in the finals of the 2010 Newby Teas Tiffin Cup, held at the House of Commons, in 2010.

As well as impressing celebrities, the menu leaves its mark on everyday diners at the restaurant, who return time after time to try something new.

Its menu, packed with freshly cooked cuisine infused with a variety of special spices, includes a range of starters, from King Prawn Bhajee on Puri and Kepsi Fish to Dum se Kebab – minced meat mixed with onions, herbs and spices, wrapped in a crispy fried bread.

Diners are spoilt for choice with its vast selection of main courses including fish dishes, old favourites such as a Chicken or Lamb Tikka Bhuna, and Tandoori, Biriani, Curry, Balti and vegetarian dishes.

Alongside these there are also a variety of Persian dishes to choose from including Dansak

Piri Piri and several Chef's Recommendations such as Jardaloo Chicken, Malai Mussala and Madhu Khatta – chargrilled chicken marinated with herbs and spices to give a combination of different flavours.

On Sundays its lunchtime and evening buffets, from noon to 3pm and from 6-10pm, provide fantastic value-for-money for all the family as you can eat as much as you like for just £7.95 for adult, with children under the age of 12 dining for just £4.95. What's more, the vast buffet has also been recently extended with more choice, which is ideal for vegetarians.

The Taj Mahal, which is open seven days a week, from noon to 2.30pm and from 6-11.30pm, also offers a full takeaway service with free local delivery.

For further information about the restaurant, which is fully licensed and air conditioned, call 01702 711006 or visit www.the-tajmahal.co.uk

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eating out

Domenico in the Xmas spirit at the Lemon Tree

A NEW manager with a wealth of experience is looking forward to his first Christmas at The Lemon Tree, and what a mouth-watering feast they have planned for you.

Domenico, from Domenicos Restaurant in Southchurch Road, Southend, says he's very excited to see everyone again in Southchurch, having built up a huge following in the area over the years.

Having now joined The Lemon Tree, Domenico, and the restaurant's owner, Servet, are looking forward to a festive season like no other.

This December The Lemon Tree will be the perfect setting for pre-Christmas Party Meals with family, friends and work colleagues, as they will be serving a two-course lunchtime meal for £11.95 per person and a three-course evening meal for £22.95 per person, both of which offer a choice of five starters and five main courses.

Its lunchtime Christmas menu includes everything from winter soup, crispy fried whitebait and prime British beef meat balls for starters, and escalope of organic turkey breast, freshly roasted beef, oven roasted salmon, stuffed supreme of organic chicken or tossed penne pasta with aubergine, tomato fresh basil and zucchini for main dishes.

Its evening Christmas menu is also packed with a wide range of choices including pan fried Cornish mackerel, winter soup, sautéed king prawns in garlic butter, salad of buffalo mozzarella or the finest prosciutto for starters, followed by a choice of 10oz T-bone steak, stuffed



(L-R) The Lemon Tree's owner, Servet, with new manager Domenico

supreme of organic chicken, arborio rice sautéed with asparagus and green zucchini, Coda Di Rosso - fresh monk fish tails with roasted peppers, black olives, tomato, capers and fish fume and Tacchino Di Natallie, escalope of organic turkey breast with all the trimmings and a sage, garlic and Pinot Grigio sauce.

This is all followed by a choice of delicious desserts including white chocolate profiteroles, strawberry cheesecake, traditional Christmas pudding or Ameretto and Baileys tiramisu.

Those also looking to celebrate on Christmas Eve, Boxing Day and New Year's Eve can also join The Lemon Tree, when they will also be serving special menus including a six-course menu on Christmas Day for £65 and a three-course menu on Boxing Day for £22.95.

Anyone interested in making a Christmas

booking is urged to call for further information and to book early to avoid disappointment.

The restaurant, at 513 Southchurch Road, in Southchurch village, offers fantastic entertainment and five star cuisine throughout the year including a new pasta and pizza menu and an extensive à la carte menu, a special Lunch Menu and children's menu, as well as a two-course roast for just £12.95 per person on Sundays.

The Lemon Tree, which boasts an extensive wine and champagne list, has seating for up to 80 people and a beautiful dining area with lantern roof, also offers a three-course party menu on Saturdays throughout the year for £22.95.

For further information call the restaurant on 01702 467793, visit its website at www.lemontreesouthend.co.uk or join them on Facebook.



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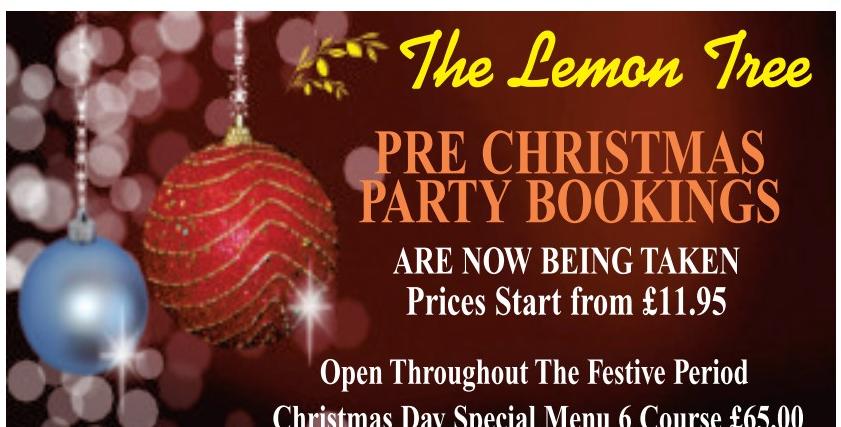
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NEW - SHOP/OFFICE WITH A2 USE - APPROX. 1,087 SQ FT (100.912 SQ M) - LONDON ROAD, BENFLEET, SS7 5SQ. Good location near KFC, Natwest Bank, Co-Op, Tesco Express. Recently refurbished. Parking to the rear. 2 Lock-up garages. Superb trading position and offers good bus links to and from the area. Professional A2 office users preferred, suit Solicitor, Accountant, Estate Agent, Bookmakers (STP) etc. **New lease available at rental of £18,000 per annum exclusive Leasehold.** Ref. V4968E



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Landlord Question

Is PAT Testing Compulsory for rental properties?

Think Property Answer

Portable Appliance Tests or PATs are an electrical check carried out on 'movable' items such as kettles, microwaves, Hoovers, table lamps, toasters and coffee machines and many electricians will tell you they must be carried out before tenants move into a property.

Legally speaking this is not true. There is no law that says PAT checks must be carried out, something the government recently clarified.

What the law does state is that all electrical equipment within a rental property must be safe to use and that it's the landlord's responsibility to ensure this before tenants move in and, equally, during the tenancy too. Most experts, including those from the Electrical Safety Council, recommend landlords make a visual inspection of all the electrical appliances provided within each rented property so check cables aren't worn or that plugs are damaged. It is also recommended that any new items feature the 'CE' kite mark which is the manufacturer's claim that it meets all European safety legislation.

Whether you then decide to get all the items PAT checked is a matter of choice not law. But most experts agree that, if landlords want peace of mind, then the £50-£100 it will cost to get a qualified electrician in to complete PAT checks is worth it.

A visual examination is the most important factor, but if an item were to short and then catch fire then being able to prove that it had been PAT checked recently (every two years for smaller items and four years for larger ones) would help matters.

More importantly PAT checks may flag up potential problems before tenants move in but don't rely on them alone – they should not be completed instead of a visual check but rather as a back up.



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ASK THE AGENT

ALAN KIRKMAN



Alan Kirkman is a Director of both Tudor Estates in Southend and Essex TEAM part of a network of independently owned estate agents who share their instructions for the benefit of giving their client properties maximum market exposure. Alan has been an estate agent for over 32 years.

Q. I made an initial offer on a property and subsequently learned that a higher offer had been accepted – without my having the opportunity to go higher myself. Is this fair?

A. That rather depends on whether your offer was accepted first. If it was, then you have every right to feel aggrieved, and the agent concerned may have a case to answer. If, on the other hand, you simply submitted an initial offer which was never actually accepted, and someone else came along and offered more, then it's obviously a somewhat different situation. In both cases, however, you should have been informed.

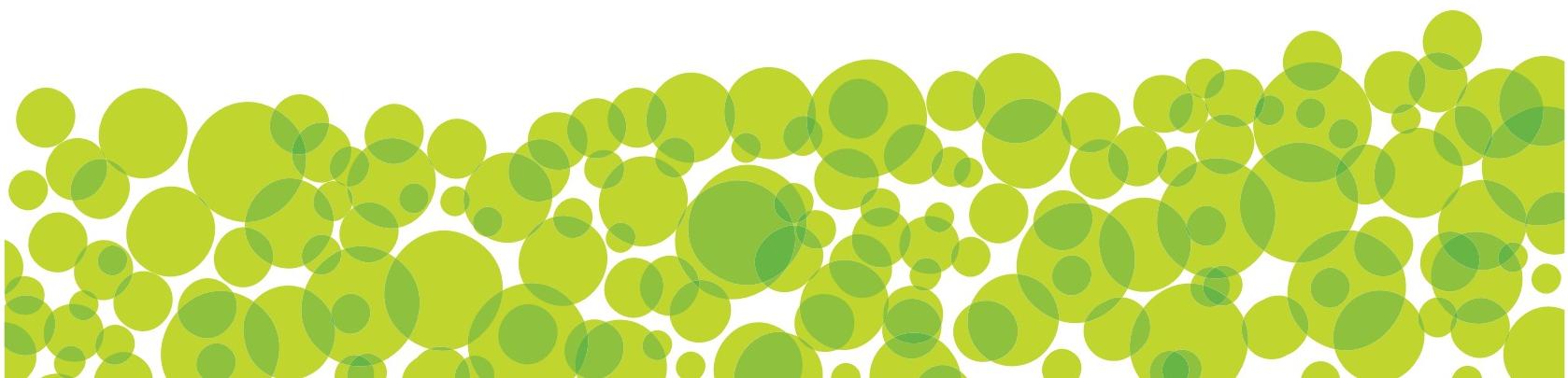
Of course, there is another way of looking at this. If you had been given a second chance to make a better offer, knowing that someone else had offered more, then it could be argued that this would hardly be fair on the other person, who made their higher offer in good faith, without the benefit of any similar "inside knowledge." Unless, of course, he or she was given the same chance! In some parts of the country, such is the demand for property at the moment that this is exactly what happens. Either the agent goes backwards and forwards between the two competing buyers until one or other drops out, or – more commonly – interested parties are simply asked to submit "full and final" offers.

When the market returns to something approaching "normal" – by which I mean more of a balance between supply and demand – then I expect both these practices will tend to disappear.

In the meantime, it is always worth bearing two general points in mind. Firstly, it is the seller's decision which offer to accept – indeed, it is absolutely their right to do so – and that does not necessarily mean that they will choose the highest. Secondly, when it comes to buying and selling property in this country, nothing is legally binding on either party until contracts are exchanged. Up to that point, both seller and buyer are both perfectly free to change their minds at any time.

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HADLEIGH £152,000

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LEIGH-ON-SEA £775 pcm

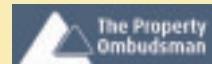
- * Ground Floor Purpose Built Two Bedroom Maisonette
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- * Parking to Front & Rear.
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Westcliff On Sea £249,000

Situated within a landmark character building is this attractive fully self contained ground floor apartment with extensive Estuary views and has the advantage of large South facing sun balcony. Allcoat House was extensively renovated in 2006 to an extremely high specification. The apartment also benefits from large garage and attractive communal gardens. The apartment offers early vacant possession and keys held for viewing.

Character building	Double bedroom
Ground floor	Lounge/kitchen
Estuary views	Bathroom
South facing sun balcony	Large garage
High Specification	Communal gardens

Westcliff On Sea £299,950



Unique and individually designed contemporary three bedroom detached property situated a short distance from Westcliff station and Hamlet Court Road with a sunny South facing aspect and off street parking. NHBC 10 year guarantee. The accommodation comprises entrance hall, light and airy open plan living / kitchen, utility and cloakroom to the ground floor with three bedrooms and modern bathroom to the first floor. The property also benefits from being energy conscious with radiator heating, double glazing along with back up of solar panels to the South facing roof.

Westcliff On Sea £285,000



Being situated within a central location of Westcliff is this four bedroom end of terrace family house offering large ground floor living accommodation. The property benefits from modern fitted kitchen along with gas central heating and double glazing. Good size rear garden and off street parking.

Westcliff On Sea £249,000



Situated within a landmark character building is this attractive first floor apartment offering extensive estuary views and having the advantage of large South facing sun balcony. Allcoat house was extensively renovated in 2006 to an extremely high specification. The property also benefits from large garage and attractive communal gardens. The apartment offers early vacant possession.

Westcliff On Sea £94,500



First floor flat situated within a central location of Westcliff. The property benefits from full double glazing and gas central heating as well as own half of rear garden, which is approached via a side access. EPC rating D

Southend On Sea £75,000



Being situated on the popular Astronauts estate is this purpose built first floor studio apartment offering a lounge/bedroom, spacious shower room /wc and fitted kitchen. The property is well maintained throughout and benefits from full UPVC double glazing, communal gardens and ample communal parking. Ideal first time purchase or buy to let investment.

Southend On Sea £74,450



Ground floor retirement apartment for the over sixty's which is conveniently situated close Southend town centre. Facilities include a laundry room, games room and a hairdressers. The property is warden controlled and there is no onward chain. Share of Freehold.

Southend On Sea £169,950



Immaculate and spacious ground floor purpose built apartment located just off of Southend seafront within a highly sought after development. There is a large open plan lounge/diner, separate fitted kitchen with integrated appliances and two bedrooms, the main having en-suite, with a further bathroom/wc. Allocated parking and own garden personal seating area. No onward chain.

Southend On Sea £600 pcm



Spacious second floor apartment situated within a central location of Southend close to all shops and railway stations. Open plan lounge/diner with fitted kitchen with appliances, double bedroom with mirror fronted wardrobes, attractive bathroom/wc with white suite and chrome fittings, double glazing, electric heating, lift and stairs to all floors.

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Drivetime

Keeping baby looking fresh

By Ian Donaldson

FIAT is making sure its cute little 500 stays fresh as the day it first appeared by adding new style, comfort and technological enhancements.

A key new feature is the segment-first seven-inch digital instrument display which combines cutting-edge technology without disrupting the trademark look of the cabin.

The layout and execution of the speedometer, rev counter and trip computer will be familiar, but the centre of the display can be configured to show various trip computer readouts, such as distance travelled, instant fuel consumption and range.

A new 105bhp 0.9-litre TwinAir engine uses a high-efficiency turbocharger and a Start and Stop fuel-saving system to provide even more power and efficiency.

Bigger brother to the 500 is the family friendly 500L, which this year gained the option of two new 120bhp engines – the 1.6 MultiJet II turbo-diesel and the 1.4 T-Jet petrol.

Need room for extra passengers? Then you should look to the Fiat 500 MPW, which offers a third row of seats in a car that shares lots of the style that makes the little 500 such a must-have buy among the fashionistas.

The third generation Fiat Panda, Europe's best-selling super-mini, is bigger, roomier, safer and more fuel efficient than its predecessors. It's the latest version of a well loved car that's become legendary for its use of space, compact dimensions, fun style and functionality.

Another Fiat well worth a look is the new, limited-edition Punto Jet Black 2, finished in crossover black metallic paint and equipped with dark tinted rear privacy glass and smoked, 17-inch alloy wheels as standard. Body-coloured side skirts and a matching rear spoiler; sports suspension; front fog lights; special side stripes and a tailgate logo complete the bespoke look.



CUTE: Fiat has added new style, comfort and technological enhancements

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With new figures from the Highways Agency revealing that it deals with more than 9,000 preventable breakdowns each summer, there's never been a better time for drivers to consider their car's condition.

Fortunately for motorists in Essex, Toomey is on hand to remind Vauxhall owners of the free-to-join Vauxhall MasterFit Service Club, which offers considerable savings on car maintenance. Drivers who own a Vauxhall over two years old could save up to 25% off servicing and repairs and get half price MOTs when they join the MasterFit Service Club.

What's more, to make joining the club even more attractive, all those who sign up to the service before 30th September 2014 will receive a free £25 MasterFit voucher to use against their next service, repair or accessory purchase.

Barry Ives, Retail Operator at Toomey, with sites in Basildon and Southend, explains: "With the holiday season upon us, many drivers will be taking to the road, and amidst all the excitement of the summer, there's nothing more disheartening than dealing with breakdowns or troubles on your travels. As part of our commitment to making motoring more affordable for customers, we're delighted to be reminding local Vauxhall drivers with a vehicle two years or older, of the fantastic discounts and benefits available to them when they sign up to the Vauxhall MasterFit Service Club."

"It's a great way for owners to take care of their car for less, as in addition to a great range of offers, members can enjoy the peace of mind that comes from knowing their Vauxhall is in the capable hands of the people who know their vehicle best." Vauxhall MasterFit expertise

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To give complete reassurance, members of the Vauxhall MasterFit Service Club have access to high quality, Vauxhall trained technicians, who know their car better than anyone else.

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essential and non-essential work, a free check for safety enhancements and upgrades to a vehicle and its software, plus a free Wash & Vac with every annual service.

The Vauxhall MasterFit Price Promise ensures that Toomey will match any written like-for-like service and repair quote from a local competitor. And with flexible booking times to suit, as well as a free courtesy vehicle or



local collection* with annual service and warranty work, taking advantage couldn't be easier or more convenient.

Barry Ives concludes: "We hope that many Vauxhall drivers who are currently missing out on the chance to benefit from a range of fantastic discounts are encouraged to sign up for free to the Vauxhall MasterFit Service and make the most of what is available to them. We'd like to invite drivers of Vauxhall vehicles, aged over two years, to contact us, or alternatively go online and sign up for free."

For details about Vauxhall MasterFit Service offers available at Toomey, please visit online at www.toomey.uk.com/vauxhall.

Alternatively, to discover more about the Vauxhall MasterFit Service Club and to join for free, please visit www.myvauxhall.co.uk. * Local collection within 5 miles/20 minutes from local Vauxhall retailer.

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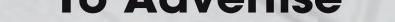
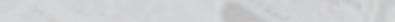
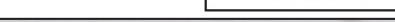
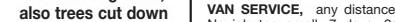
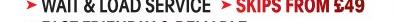
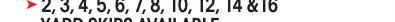
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FIRST PODIUM FOR AmD TEAM

Motor Racing

THE AmDTuning.com team was able to celebrate a stunning breakthrough podium at Knockhill as the Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship headed to Scotland for the seventh event of the season.

The West Thurrock-based team made the long journey north seeking to bounce back from a challenging weekend at Snetterton earlier in the month, where driver Dave Newsham had been restricted to just a single point scoring finish.

Following a successful test session at Snetterton, the team headed for Knockhill in optimistic mood although the weekend started on a huge low following the news on Friday morning that Dave's mother had passed away.

Electing to race on in his home event, Dave qualified 16th on the grid at the wheel of his Ford Focus, with the possibility that he could have been higher had it not been for the fact that he just missed out starting on his final flying lap in the session at the chequered flag.

A strong drive in race one saw Dave move through the pack to ninth place and, despite an issue with the tyre pressures on his car, went one place better in race two to secure eighth.

That put him third on the grid for race three when the reverse grid draw took place and although he slipped back a place when the lights went out, a fine move at the hairpin on the third lap saw him move back into a podium position ahead of former champion Fabrizio Giovanardi. Fighting his way ahead of the BMW of Nick Foster into second place,

Dave Newsham celebrates on the Knockhill podium



Dave came under increasing pressure from championship leader Colin Turkington before bringing his car to the finish for a first podium finish of the year.

"I'm absolutely delighted," Dave said.

"We've shown we have the pace on more than one occasion this season but for various reasons, we've never been in a position to really make it pay. Here, we did that in the first two races and then in race three, I was able to make two strong passes to get into second place and then just had to hold on."

"Getting ahead of Fabrizio early

on was key and then when I got through past Nick, I knew I had to push as hard as I could. Colin put me under huge pressure towards the end and I knew he was coming, but there was no way he was going to get through."

"Team boss Shaun Hollamby shared in the delight as his team secured a first podium since joining the series at the start of the 2010 campaign. "That is like a win for us; it tops everything that has come before," he said.

"This result stems from the work we did at the test at Snetterton and this weekend, the team has done a

great job and Dave has been fantastic behind the wheel - especially in the circumstances.

"His drive in race three was faultless. He was aggressive when he needed to be and then drove with his head. To see him bring the car home to the finish was just brilliant."

"This series has the highest level of competition in touring cars and for us to be fighting with a team like WSR for the result is a great achievement. I can recall watching Ayrton Senna winning in one of their cars in Formula 3, and now we've battled hard against them to secure our first podium."

Redbacks fall at final hurdle in epic encounter

Baseball

Essex Redbacks 3 Richmond Knights 5

THE Essex Redbacks came within one run of winning a place in the National Baseball Championships in a play-off game that had to go to extra innings to be decided.

The Richmond Knights had won three of the four contests between the two teams this season, but both sides brought their best performances to the match with the Knights leading 2-0 after seven innings in a game where great pitching and fantastic fielding were on display.

In the bottom of the seventh, the Redbacks halved the deficit only

for the Knights to restore their two-run advantage in the next at-bat.

However, in the bottom of the eighth inning, the hosts scored twice to level the scores and then prevented Richmond from scoring in the ninth, giving them a chance to walk off with a victory.

But it wasn't to be, as Richmond dug deep to prevent Essex from scoring and then plated two runs in the top of the 10th inning – equivalent of extra time in baseball – and once again held the Redbacks from getting any on the board to run out 5-3 winners and head to the British Baseball Federation National Baseball Championships next weekend.

Redbacks manager Vince Warner

said: "This was by far the best game that either side had played in all season and it was fitting that it was in the play-offs that such great baseball came to the fore."

"We've had a great season on and off the field and we didn't expect to come as far as we did after a tricky year in 2013. It's a testament to the efforts of everyone in the club that we've done so well."

"A special shout-out should go to Sean Briscomb. He's pitched brilliantly all year, especially today, and he does so much else off the field that allows us to be in the position we are as a club."

Essex Redbacks II 10
Herts Raptors 19

THE Essex Redbacks' second team finished their season with a tough loss to an experienced Herts Raptors side.

Stewart Meikle and Dan Straw combined on the mound for the Redbacks, limiting the Raptors' chances to score.

But the Essex side were playing a number of new faces in preparation for next season and beyond and sometimes struggled to put together decent offence.

A comeback looked to be on the cards when Straw smashed a home run to bring the Redbacks within three runs of tying the game in the penultimate inning, but Herts had enough to extend their lead and close out the victory.

Non-league round-up

Tough time in Conference

by Brian Jeeves

IT was a difficult weekend for the regions Vanarama Conference clubs, with both Braintree Town and Concord Rangers tasting defeat.

In the Premier Division, Braintree narrowly went down 3-2 at Lincoln City, with Davis (pen) and Brundle supplying their consolation goals, while South Division Concord Rangers came a cropper against Eastbourne Borough at the Aspect Arena. Tony Stokes fired the net late on for the Beach Boys, but a brace from McCallum and one from Pacquette secured a 3-1 win for the visitors.

But it was better news for Chelmsford City who picked up a point and scored their first goal of the campaign against Sutton United at the Melbourne Stadium. Glen Southam fired the Clares ahead from the penalty spot only for an own goal by James Lowe to restore parity.

In the Ryman Premier League, Canvey Island left it late to clinch the points. A John Sands strike followed by a last minute Marlon Aggyakwa goal saw off Enfield Town at Park Lane in front of a decent 352 crowd.

Grays Athletic were our big winners of the day, trouncing Hampton & Richmond Borough 4-0 at the Beveree Stadium. Jay Leader, Jamie Guy, Lloyd Harrington and an own goal from Billy Jeffreys secure Grays triumph, while there were draws for Witham Town, 3-3 at Harrow Borough, and East Thurrock United, 1-1 with Hendon.

Junior Dadson was on target for AFC Hornchurch, but the Irchins crashed 2-1 at Leatherhead, and it was even worse news for Billericay Town as goals from Ryan Moss (2) Charlie Allen (2) and Zachary Attwood condemned the Blues to a 5-1 setback at Margate, Richard Halle grabbed Town's consolation.

In the North Division, two goals from Steven Carvell and one from Daniel Callaway helped Barkingside recover "Roy of the Rovers style" to beat Cheshunt. Side had trailed 2-0 at the break. And two second half goals were enough to see Aveley home against Chatham Town Petrit Elbi and Marcus Elliott the men on target as the Miller triumphed 2-1.

Maldon & Tiptree edged out Romford by the odd goal in three, and despite an early goal from Courtney White, Brentwood Town had to be content with a 1-1 draw with Thamesmead Town.

There was an entertaining affair at Needham Market where the home side won a din-don encounter with Tilbury 5-3, and Redbridge also conceded five, going down 5-1 at Soham Town Rangers.

Great Wakering Rovers remain rooted to the bottom of the table after Harlow Town ran out 4-2 winners in a lively encounter at Burroughs Park. Stuart Hepburn and Tony Jacobs found the net for the home side in front of a respectable 134 crowd, nevertheless Rovers remain without a point from five outings.

The game between Watham Abbey and Burnham Ramblers was abandoned after 20 minutes following a suspected leg break for Abbey man Ben Bradbury.

In the Essex Senior League there was a huge win for Haringey Borough who secured a 10-1 win at Enfield 1893, a result that prompted Enfield manager Paul Norris to stand down immediately after the game. Clapton won the Newham derby by a single goal at Tower Hamlets, while Basildon United saw off relegated Waltham Forest by two goals to one. Southend Manor picked up a 3-1 win at Greenhouse London and Bowers & Pitsea drew 0-0 at Barking. Hullbridge Sports went down 3-2 at Newham, it was the same outcome at Sawbridgeworth Town, where visitors Ilford snatched the points. In the other game, impressive FC Romania saw off Takeley 3-1.

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